



Governor's Task Force
on the Humane Treatment of Animals
Minutes of August 9, 2006 Meeting

Taskforce Members Present: Virginia Hokenstrom, Michael Hughes, Dick Wentzell, Elin Phinizy, Joanne Bourbeau, Roni McCall, Joyce Matott, David Stowe, Steve Sprowl, Laura Slitt, Senator Sheila Roberge, Jerilee Zezula, Representative Nancy Johnson, Steve Crawford, Mark Ellingwood, Maureen Prendergast, Patrick Murphy and Sheila Presby.

Also present: Della Fortin, Alex Koutroubus, Laura Slitt, Dorinne and Rachelle Whynott

Dr. Zezula opened the meeting at 2:01pm

Changes to July's meeting minutes: none

The subcommittees met before the taskforce meeting. A summary of those meetings is below:

Law subcommittee summary

Problem with the laws, enforcement with the laws - why is this a problem?

Do a poll to the taskforce members on what would you support.

Subcommittee will develop a survey to have completed by taskforce members.

Outreach project to see what deficiencies in the law kept a case from getting to court. Survey, PD's sheriffs, ACO's etc. Ask Susan Morrell if she can do the same for the prosecutors and judges.

Education subcommittee summary:

1st press release is ready trying to decide how to get it out - Dr. Zezula will work on who in the governor's office handles this and if they don't then she will contact the newspapers.

Putting a class together on animal cruelty - found a link to the state education dept - looking at NAHEE classes will be set up based on 2 sets of age groups 5-8th grade and then high school.

Sub committee is going to meet via email rather than come in at 1pm to meet before taskforce meeting for the immediate future.

Funding subcommittee summary:

Sub Committee members believe that Real Estate Tax increase could fund the expense of getting animal cruelty cases into the courts so that the burden is not on the town.

The proposal is to add 25cents (amounting to 2.5 million dollars) on the real estate transfer tax stamp - Sullivan county was polled and willing to support it - per Sharon King, Registry of Deeds as long as the county doesn't have to deal with the money. Proposed that the money goes directly to a new state dedicated fund - Impact is 12.5 cents increase to the buyer, 12.5 cents increase from the seller - money goes directly to the animals expenses. 15.00 dollars per thousand is the current transfer fee.

Concern from the taskforce members is that the state will still take 5% off the top as is policy with all funds. Law would have to be drafted and accepted to do this. Start in the House.

Dick will work on a draft of how he came to these numbers to raise this kind of money based on information from 2005 RE transfers

Discussion/Concerns:

1. Elin Phinizy has a concern of whether the dedicated fund will pass in House or Senate hearings.
2. Representative Johnson has tried to add to the transfer tax 3 years ago and it didn't fly.
3. Virginia Hokenstrom asked if it can be added to the spay neuter fund rather than another dedicated fund?

4. Question arose what does real estate money have to do with animals?
Background: funding traditionally comes from a related area would we be going against the norm by not having the money come from some sort of animal related program.
5. Representative Johnson suggested if a bill is to be proposed perhaps 2 bills one to help the neuter fund and 1 for the animal abuse fund would get a better chance of getting one of them passed rather than putting all hope on only 1.
6. Laura Slitt suggested that real estate does tie into animals - the growth is affecting animals with the amount of habitat being torn down to build homes, buildings etc. creating some of the animal issues in New Hampshire.
7. Taskforce concern is that perhaps another strategy be developed rather than put everything on the RE Tax increase to pass. What if it doesn't get beyond hearings? Will the House and/or Senate support such a bill?

Website: <http://nhcruelty.home.comcast.net/> Dr. Zezula informed the taskforce that a request to have a link from the NH.gov website to this taskforce's website has been accepted and should be uploaded soon.

A suggestion was made and accepted to have the taskforce members emailed when changes to the webpage are made.

Elin Phinizy requested one of the links on the webpage be changed from animal cruelty in the news - to just "in the news".

Since we have many new taskforce members a copy of Governor Lynch's Executive order will accompany these minutes when they are completed.

This is a summary of the executive order:

The Commission shall evaluate animal abuse in New Hampshire; perform a thorough analysis of all statutory and administrative rules; assess State, community and private programs that address animal abuse; and provide recommendations to the Governor on ways to better prevent and address animal abuse in New Hampshire.

The taskforce was given a presentation by Laura Slitt of Bartlett, NH on "The link between violence against animals and violence against humans".

The taskforce then went on to set up the future meetings for the remainder of this year. They will be on Thursdays in Room LOB307 with the subcommittees meeting at 1pm and the taskforce at 2pm. Dr. Jerilee Zezula will be chairing the meetings in Senator Roberge's absence. The Senator will be absent and Patrick Murphy, her legislative aide will be absent from these meetings until after the elections.

The remaining taskforce meetings are:

September 14th

October 12th

November 9th

December 14th

The meeting adjourned at 3:08 pm.

Minutes submitted by Roni McCall, Through Their Eyes, The National Animal Abuse Registry.